

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 12-15 are presently pending in this application, Claims 6-11 are Withdrawn from further consideration by the Examiner, and Claims 1-3, 5, 13 and 15 are amended. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 3-4 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Sugawara et al. (U.S. Patent 5,536,995). However, Claims 2, 5, 12, 13 and 15 were indicated as including allowable subject matter.

First, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 2, 5, 12-13 and 15 include allowable subject matter. Claims 2 and 5 are rewritten in independent form including the subject matter of Original Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 2 and 5 and Claim 12-13 and 15 dependent therefrom patentably define over the applied prior art.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 1, 3-4 and 14, Applicants respectfully traverse the outstanding grounds for rejection, because in Applicants' view, independent Claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Sugawara et al. as discussed below.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, "the tempered glass sheet has a peripheral region including a periphery of the glass sheet and a central region occupying an inside of the peripheral region, and an average surface compressive stress in the central region is larger than an average surface compressive stress in the peripheral region."

Instead, Sugawara et al. describes that the glass panel 3 for CRTs has a face portion 7 and a skirt portion 6 extending vertically from the face portion 7. The thickness of the face portion becomes thicker as the distance from the center of the face portion is larger

(Sugawara et al. at column 8, lines 24-28). Since the thickness of the glass panel 3 is not uniform, the glass panel 3 for CRTs is not “a tempered glass sheet.”

Thus, Sugawara et al. does not disclose “the tempered glass sheet has a peripheral region including a periphery of the glass sheet and a central region occupying an inside of the peripheral region, and an average surface compressive stress in the central region is larger than an average surface compressive stress in the peripheral region,” as recited in Claim 1.

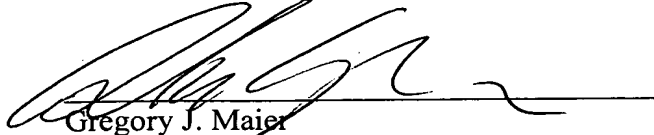
Accordingly, independent Claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Sugawara et al. Therefore, Claim 1 and the pending Claims 3-4 and 14 dependent directly or indirectly from Claim 1 are believed to be allowable.

In addition, Applicants note that the inventions recited in Claims 3-4 and 14 enable to provide a tempered glass satisfying regulations, which does not require additional capital investments. Generally, if the thickness of the glass sheet becomes thinner, increasing surface compressive stress value becomes more difficult. To cope with this problem, by increasing surface compressive stress value in a specific region as recited in Claim 3, or by increasing compressive stress value with a specific amount as recited in Claims 4 and 14, the claimed invention successfully provides a thin tempered glass sheet which satisfies the regulations to be applied.

In view of the amendments and discussions presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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